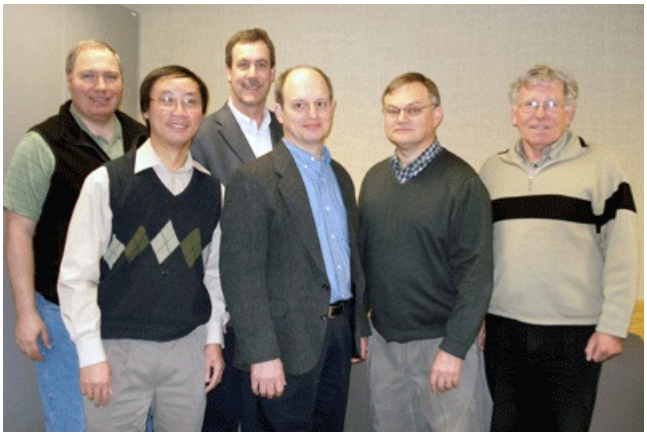

INL Associate Laboratory Director for Nuclear Science and Technology Phillip Finck, second from right, congratulates the five Laboratory Fellows in his division. They are from left, Dave Petti, Nam Dinh, Terry Todd, Steve Herring and Dieter Wolf.

# INL nuclear safety engineer named Lab Fellow

by Teri Ehresman , *INL Communications & Public Affairs*

A nuclear safety engineer has been promoted to the designation Idaho National Laboratory Fellow. Selection as an INL Laboratory Fellow equates to being named to an endowed chair at a major university, an elite member of a professional society or a member of a national academy.

Nam Truc Dinh, Ph.D., has joined the elite ranks held by only eight others at INL. The designation of Laboratory Fellow is the top scientific achievement designation and recognizes an individual's outstanding contributions to the scientific and engineering community.

Dinh has 20 years of research and development experience. Prior to joining INL in March 2008, Dinh was a Chair Professor of Nuclear Power Safety at the Royal Institute of Technology, the premier technical university in Sweden. He directed the Division of Nuclear Power Safety at the university.

He was nominated for the award by Ronaldo Szilard, Ph.D., director of Nuclear Science and Engineering at the INL. "Dinh is a world-class engineering scientist who is widely known in the nuclear and mechanical engineering communities," he said. Szilard also noted that Dinh has made significant impact on the resolution of several issues in Light Water Reactor (LWR) safety and played a principal role in the severe accident treatment and passive safety design in GE-Hitachi's Economic Simplified Boiling Water Reactor plant design.

"I am really honored by the trust and confidence INL colleagues and management have placed in me in selecting me for this honor," Dinh said. "I came to Idaho and INL because the laboratory has its mission to lead the nuclear renaissance. The future is happening here because of the high caliber of people at this laboratory. I wanted to be part of this future."

Dinh was a student in the Soviet Union and was scheduled to visit the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant just a few days after the April 26, 1986 accident. He said that accident was a turning point in his career. "It impacted the way I think," he said. "I decided nuclear safety was something I wanted to focus my career on."

Since arriving at INL, Dinh initiated, formulated, communicated and led a cross-departmental, multi-institutional effort on development of a Next-Generation Production Code for Nuclear Reactor System Analysis and Safety Margin Qualification. Built on INL's legacy RELAP5 code, according to Szilard the new project, called RELAP7, provides a mechanism to capitalize on both the previous investments and the ongoing efforts at INL in modeling and simulation.

At INL, Dinh is the technical lead for the Risk-Informed Safety Margin Characterization pathway in the U.S. Department of Energy's Light Water Reactor Sustainability Program Technical Integration Office. He is the academic dean for the Modeling Experimentation and Validation Summer School scheduled this July in Idaho Falls.

In 1994, at the age of 29, Dinh was the youngest person to receive a Doctorate of Science (the highest academic degree possible in Russia) from the Moscow Power Engineering Institute. He received a Doctorate of Philosophy from the same Russian technical university in 1991.

In 2004, he received the American Nuclear Society ANS Young Member Engineering Achievement Award. The citation recognized him for "innovative approaches to resolving outstanding LWR safety issues and developing multi-phase flow computational methodology for reliable and accurate prediction." He also received the ANS Thermal-Hydraulic Division 1999 Best Paper Award and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) Thermophysics 2003 Best Paper Award.

Others previously selected as INL Fellows are William Apel, James Delmore, J. Stephen Herring, Paul Meakin, David Petti, Herschel Smartt, Terry Todd and Dieter Wolf.

A candidate for Laboratory Fellow is recommended by the employee's manager to the Fellows Promotion Committee, which reviews detailed promotion packages. The packages include data on individual contributions, professional achievements, leadership positions held in technical organizations, letters of recommendation and an evaluation of the person's overall impact.

Feature Archive